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# Security Council

Fifty-first Year

*Provisional*

**3713**th Meeting

Friday, 15 November 1996, 4 p.m.

New York

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| *President*: | Mr. Wisnumurti | (Indonesia) |
| *Members*: | Botswana | Mr. Legwaila |
| | Chile | Mr. Somavía |
| | China | Mr. Qin Huasun |
| | Egypt | Mr. Gomaa |
| | France | Mr. Dejammet |
| | Germany | Mr. Henze |
| | Guinea-Bissau | Mr. Cabral |
| | Honduras | Mr. Martínez Blanco |
| | Italy | Mr. Ferrarin |
| | Poland | Mr. Włosowicz |
| | Republic of Korea | Mr. Park |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Lavrov |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Sir John Weston |
| | United States of America | Mrs. Albright |

## Agenda

The situation in the Great Lakes region

Letter dated 14 November 1996 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1996/941)

96-86834 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one week of the date of publication*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

*The meeting was called to order at 4.40 p.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**The situation in the Great Lakes region**

**Letter dated 14 November 1996 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1996/941)**

**The President:** I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Austria, Belgium, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Congo, Denmark, Finland, Gabon, Ireland, Israel, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Rwanda, Spain, Sweden and Zaire, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

*At the invitation of the President, Mr. Nsanze (Burundi), Mr. Kayinamura (Rwanda), Mr. Lukabu Khabouji N'Zaji (Zaire) took seats at the Council table; Mr. Sucharipa (Austria), Mr. Baekelandt (Belgium), Ms. Boum (Cameroon), Mr. Fowler (Canada), Mr. Abibi (Congo) Mr. Kimberg (Denmark), Mr. Breitenstein (Finland), Mr. Dangue Rewaka (Gabon), Mr. Campbell (Ireland), Mr. Ayalon (Israel), Mr. Wolzfeld (Luxembourg), Mr. Biegman (Netherlands), Mr. Biørn Lian (Norway), Mr. Catarino (Portugal), Mr. Zulueta (Spain) and Mr. Oswald (Sweden) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.*

**The President:** The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/1996/941, which contains the text of a letter dated 14 November 1996 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/1996/943, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Belgium, Botswana, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Egypt, France, Gabon, Germany, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Spain, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Zaire. Austria, Cameroon, Congo, Finland, Israel, Luxembourg and Sweden have joined as sponsors of the draft resolution contained in document S/1996/943.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to the following other documents: S/1996/922, letter dated 11 November 1996 from the Permanent Observer of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the text of the communiqué of the Fourth Extraordinary Session of the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, held at Addis Ababa on 11 November 1996; S/1996/942, letter dated 15 November 1996 from the Chargé d'affaires, a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Zaire to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council; and S/1996/944, letter dated 15 November 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council.

Members of the Council have received photocopies of the letter dated 15 November 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, which will be issued as document S/1996/945.

The first speaker on my list is the representative of Zaire, on whom I now call.

**Mr. Lukabu Khabouji N'Zaji** (Zaire) *(interpretation from French):* Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir. We have even had personal relations for many years and are most pleased to see you presiding over the Council for the month of November, which will be a difficult month for the Council.

At the same time, I would like to thank the Permanent Representative of Honduras for his work as President in the month of October.

On behalf of my country, I wish to express sincere thanks to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his initiative in submitting the matter of the

prevailing situation in eastern Zaire to the Security Council. We also wish to pay a well-deserved tribute to Canada and its two distinguished sons, Ambassador Chrétien and General Baril, who have both accepted very difficult missions on behalf of the United Nations, which we all cherish.

On 30 June 1960, my country achieved independence and international sovereignty. A few months later, turmoil broke out in the country that led the United Nations Security Council to take up the question of my country and to come to its rescue to save its unity and integrity. Today, that same Council is meeting to study the situation of manifest aggression, witnessed by the entire world and recognized even by the aggressors themselves.

Neighbours with whom we have maintained fraternal relations for 34 years now think that they belonged to the Hima empire. Rwanda, whose authorities came to power through arms, has forced a portion of its population out of the country. Eighty-five per cent of that population lives in camps called "refugee camps"; however, I doubt that many of you have had the opportunity to visit those camps known as "refugee camps". Those who have, I am certain, will long remember the conditions in which these populations live. People are reduced to living like animals under tents in indescribable conditions, entire families live together, relieve themselves together. That is what the camps are like.

I do not want to sicken the Council any further on the subject of the camps. This situation leaves the Kigali authorities indifferent. Day after day, they exult in saying that security reigns in Rwanda. If security reigns in Rwanda, why should the camp population living in undescribable conditions not be able to benefit from that security? They are alive, but they are refugees who have lost everything, even their dignity.

There is no way to convince us that 80 per cent of a population is composed of criminals but since we are on the subject of crime, according to the law of our countries, as far as I know, crime is perpetrated by individuals. One cannot accuse an entire population on a collective basis of having committed a crime. Genocide did in fact take place, but who conceived of it? Who carried it out? The Rwandese themselves! There were Tutsi victims, I agree, but we must not forget that there have been Hutu victims as well. The people sought by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda include Tutsis who were in power at the time, just as there are now Hutus in power. Who knows if, tomorrow, these Hutus might not also find themselves accused of genocide against their own brothers?

My country has a tradition of welcoming refugees, particularly those from Rwanda. In 1959, we took in a wave of refugees who established themselves in our country and some of whose sons are now in power in Kigali. In 1972, we took in refugees again but they were not armed. In 1994, tragedy erupted in Rwanda and Zaire took in more than 2.5 million refugees. By way of example, Germany, a developed country wealthier than Zaire, with better means and more structures to cope with refugees, took in 400,000 refugees from the former Yugoslavia. Germany had no qualms about complaining of the burden of these refugees on its territory. But, imagine Zaire — no means, in a financial crisis, in a social crisis, in an economic crisis — receiving five times the number of refugees that Germany took in. Germany knows how these refugees rewarded its generosity; Zaire is in the same boat today.

The people we took into Zaire, whom we fed and dressed, have returned through the back door with weapons to kill our Zairian population. That is why, before this Council, I wish to reiterate Zaire's position, as set out in the letter I addressed to the President of the Security Council this morning. Zaire considers that the key to the crisis in eastern Zaire is the problem of refugees, be they from Rwanda or Burundi. We therefore call on the international community to intervene and to exert pressure, on Kigali in particular, to ensure that the leaders in Kigali bring their compatriots home. I believe that, once the refugee problem has been solved, calm will return to the region. I can guarantee this because Zaire lived on good terms with Rwanda and Burundi for 34 years.

Zaire, my country, agreed to the Secretary-General's proposal to convene a regional conference to consider the problem in the region. Zaire, my country, even made an offer to the Secretary-General, through the President of the Republic of Zaire to accept the deployment of observers along our borders with our neighbours. Zaire was the sole country to welcome the Secretary-General's initiatives, in the belief that it could help solve the crisis in Rwanda and Burundi. But what did Rwanda do? Rwanda rejected that initiative; Rwanda called for the departure of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda; Rwanda reduced the proposed number of United Nations staff members allowed to stay in Kigali to a level at which they could not work

effectively. The non-governmental organizations that were permitted to function in Rwanda were minimized.

But what was Rwanda trying to do? Perhaps the Council does not know. Rwanda had a very clear-cut objective: to get rid of all witnesses. Rwanda knew that, some time ago, along the border of Zaire, an inflammatory speech was given by a local leader in which he advocated the establishment of an army. What we are experiencing today is the result of that speech. Rwanda remembered that it belongs to the Hima empire and wants to restore it. That it is its right, but we remind Rwanda that the charter of the Organization of African Unity enshrines a principle that no African country would wish to abuse: the inviolability of borders acquired after independence.

With regard to the refugee situation, how can the international community remain impassive and indifferent to what is occurring in Kigali? How can we accept that a monoethnic Government should drive away the majority of its population and then govern on behalf of that very population. The principle against which the international community fought in Bosnia and Herzegovina when it tried to stop ethnic cleansing has become a rule of thumb for the Government in Kigali. A tribe representing 85 per cent of the population is expelled from the State of Rwanda and the international community is content to follow the situation, exerting no pressure whatsoever on Kigali to take that population back.

My country made proposals when the wave of Rwandese refugees invaded my country. We were aware of the fact that there were armed elements among the refugees crossing the border. We disarmed some, but how could we disarm everybody? We could not contain such a mass. The luggage that they carried on their heads sometimes contained weapons that we were unable to inspect. However, we made a proposal to the Security Council and to the Secretary-General. Zaire identified sites where the armed elements could be separated from civilian refugees.

Former members of the Council can testify to the Council's reaction at that time: "It is going to be very expensive." Zaire is curious to know today how much the operation that we are about to undertake is going to cost. It was the reluctance of the Security Council that has brought us to the situation in which we find ourselves in today.

With regard to a regional conference, Ambassador Jesus of Cape Verde was entrusted with the happy mission of considering with leaders of the region the possibility of bringing them together. Rwanda rejected the convening of such a conference. Today, in the mandate entrusted to Ambassador Chrétien — who is in the region — such a conference is envisaged. We put it to the international community that if the initiative for the conference entrusted to Ambassador Jesus had taken place, we would not be sitting here regretting the deaths of all those who have already died.

We call upon the international community to exert greater pressure on Kigali so that the refugee problem can be solved through their return to their country.

My country is the victim of obvious aggression. I was in this Chamber as the representative of Zaire to the Security Council on 2 August 1990. We were in a similar situation then: aggression perpetrated by one State against another had sprung up in a different part of the world. We raised an army to combat that aggression, so we cannot understand the timidity with which the Security Council is dealing with the aggression against my country.

Today it is Zaire. Yesterday it was Kuwait. But who knows whose turn it will be tomorrow?

I began by thanking Canada and its two worthy sons for having agreed to this mission. I would like to say a few words about the composition of the force that is currently being authorized. I will be brief because the details appear in the letter that I sent to the President of the Security Council this morning. However, let me recall that Zaire wishes to be consulted at all times on this operation and may challenge offers from some States that it considers to be working side-by-side with the aggressor.

In closing, I should like to return to the images that our beloved CNN has been broadcasting throughout the day. It showed us a column of women and children wandering around — I do not know in which direction. It told us of the return of the refugees to their beloved country, Rwanda.

We are not dupes. That is a diversionary tactic undertaken by Rwanda. The troops of the Rwandese Patriotic Front in Goma have gone to the Mugunga camp to chase out the few refugees remaining in the camps and showed them the road to Gisenyi. The entire Rwandese cabinet went to Gisenyi to say: "We will now welcome our returning brothers." For shame! For shame! For two years, those people have been living like animals and

only today does the Rwandese cabinet go to Gisenyi to welcome them.

The Council should not let itself be duped by such manoeuvres. Rwanda is a past-master of these ploys. Let us remember that Rwanda had asked the United Nations to leave it the *matériel* used by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda. Its request made a mockery of the United Nations.

I wish to express my country's sincere gratitude for the draft resolution that the Security Council is going to adopt. It will enable the deployment of this multinational force to eastern Zaire, first for humanitarian purposes and allow for the possibility of an extended mandate for the force under United Nations auspices.

I wish to thank the Council again and I do wish to reserve my right to speak again later.

**The President**: I thank the representative of Zaire for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Rwanda, on whom I now call.

**Mr. Kayinamura** (Rwanda): Allow me, at the outset, to congratulate you warmly, Sir, on your assumption of the office of President of the Security Council for the month of November. We are convinced that, under your leadership, the Council is in safe hands. We would also like to thank Ambassador Gerardo Martínez Blanco of Honduras for his skilful guidance of the work of the Council during the month of October.

I will be responding to the statement made by the representative of Zaire, but I will spare the Council a lengthy and misleading statement so as to make good use of the purpose of this organ.

For the past 48 hours, we have been registering 100 refugees per minute crossing the border from Zaire. We expect that, by early next week, the bulk of Rwandese refugees will have regained their motherland. The Rwanda Government welcomes this long-awaited return of its nationals. We believe that the conditions are now in place for the orderly return of many more refugees. I am also happy to inform the Council that the entire cabinet accompanied the President of Rwanda to the Zaire border town of Goma to welcome incoming refugees.

The local and Government machinery have been mobilized throughout the country in order to prepare the welcome centres for refugees, where they will be received before returning to their respective homes.

In the light of these welcome developments, it is the view of the Rwandan Government that the proposed multinational force is no longer relevant, at least as far as rescuing the Rwandan refugees in eastern Zaire is concerned.

As the situation in eastern Zaire has changed, the plans for the proposed multinational force should also be changed to adapt it to the changing situation on the ground. In this regard, the multinational force should perhaps be smaller, reconsider the location of its troops, seek a new mandate and be able to quickly address its purely humanitarian mission. The mandate of the multinational force should be for a limited period of two to three months at the most.

If the mission of the proposed multinational force were to be reconsidered in view of the changing circumstances on the ground, it should be mandated to disarm the former Rwandan Government soldiers and the militia who have held captive thousands of Rwandan refugees in camps in eastern Zaire. It is further the view of my Government that the international community should help by making adequate resources available to facilitate the rehabilitation and integration of the returning refugees.

In this regard, the Rwandan Government would like to urge the Council not to hurry into the adoption of a resolution before getting the full facts about the changing circumstances on the ground. In this connection, the Rwanda Government would have no difficulty.

The humanitarian assistance that is required should be brought into Rwanda in order to cater for the humanitarian needs that have just arisen.

I would like to state that I had not expected that the Council would be subjected to a statement by the representative of Zaire, but I would like here to deny and refute the allegations put forward by the delegation of Zaire.

The historical background indicated by the representative of Zaire was given to this august body through you, Sir, in a document that was submitted to the Security Council — document S/1996/869 of 23 October

1996 — which indicated the root cause of the crisis in Zaire. We are not responsible for the misery Zaire is going through. We are not responsible for "denationalizing" their own citizens. The Rwandan Government is aware that Zaire is a long-term neighbour, we have nothing against Zaire, but Zaire should have nothing against its own citizens.

If I have briefly mentioned this document, it is because I believe it would save the Council from going into a long debate that would bore those present here.

I would like to thank you, Sir, for allowing me to make this statement and to clarify the situation of my Government in dealing with this urgent problem.

**The President:** The next speaker on my list is the representative of Burundi, on whom I now call.

**Mr. Nsanze** (Burundi): First of all, I would like to recognize, Sir, your code of conduct in your capacity as President of the Security Council, which reflects the characteristics of the policy of non-alignment, that is impartiality, conciliatory behaviour and dedication to the sacrosanct principles of the Charter of the United Nations. For this host of high qualities, you deserve our greatest tribute.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

Ambassador Martínez Blanco also deserves our gratitude, but, above all, our congratulations for the success he achieved during his mandate as President of the Security Council in October.

(*spoke in French*)

My three-page statement will highlight the need to identify and eradicate the causes of the overall problem existing in the region of the Great Lakes.

All humanity is shuddering at the sight of the horrors inflicted on a million and a half individuals. A human tidal wave has been doomed to a collective martyrdom. There are both remote and immediate causes for this suffering. The genocide that crushed nearly a million victims in a period of three months has swept from their homeland yet another million human beings. This dual and highly tragic phenomenon is the remote but principal cause of the horrendous misery that has burst into the two Kivus. In the ignoble odyssey imposed on the refugees, the greatest blame must be borne by the former Rwandan Army and its *interahamwe* militia, which, retrenched in refugee camps, have taken the latter hostage to use them as human shields.

There are more immediate causes for this suffering. For nearly three years now, various international political circles, numerous humanitarian organizations, foremost among them the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and numerous Governments, in particular those of Burundi, Rwanda and Zaire, have vied with each other in issuing warnings regarding the immense danger presented throughout the region of the Great Lakes by the million refugees crowded on the frontiers of these three countries. The militaristic designs and subversive acts of the former Rwandan troops and their backers, namely the *interahamwe* militia, continued to poison relations among member States of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes countries, namely Burundi, Rwanda and Zaire. The intermittent acts of aggression aimed against Burundi and Rwanda by the former Rwandan Army troops and the *interahamwe* were both warning signs of the general deterioration of the situation and of an imminent explosion in the region.

Fully aware of the enormous risk inherent in the presence of a large number of refugees along their shared borders, the three States, acting together and backed by UNHCR in particular, have continually sounded the alarm and requested the assistance of the international community for a triple operation they considered essential: the repatriation of the refugees to their respective countries; the disarmament of some 40,000 runaway Rwandan soldiers and their adjuncts, the *interahamwe* militia; and finally, encampment in areas far from the frontiers for refugees who opted to remain abroad.

Various alternatives were proposed, on many occasions. Although it was convinced of the merits of these urgent appeals, which were reiterated time and again, the Security Council refused to cross the Rubicon, alleging the existence of numerous obstacles, instead of taking the bull by the horns and neutralizing the former Rwandese troops and militia. These men, however, were armed to the teeth and, on top of everything else, continuously committed acts of aggression against our States and sowed desolation among our peoples. This unhealthy climate ultimately degenerated into a dangerous powder keg, which irreversibly and inevitably led to the present disaster.

Regarding the interaction between the causes of the chronic crises in the Great Lakes region, cold, hard analysis shows that the fates of the peoples of the Great Lakes region are clearly interrelated, and that, paradoxically, the interests they desperately pursue in their search for survival are in mortal conflict. A common denominator characterizes the citizens of Burundi, Rwanda and Kivu: the psychosis of fear, which is the cause of their bitter struggle to cling to their life raft. Hence, we see that instead of joining together to achieve the same ultimate goals, these fellow citizens are tearing each other apart. The result is a problem which is both shared and chronic; it is, first and foremost, up to the United Nations to tackle this issue.

Given the interdependence of their respective plights, solutions aimed at saving our peoples can no longer be selective limited to isolated, and therefore limited, areas — that is, to individual countries. To resolve the recurrent tragedies which flow from age-old causes, the imperative obligation to confront them comprehensively in the region devolves on the Security Council especially, and on all the protagonists. And, from this point of view, the eradication of the causes of the overall problem in the Great Lakes region requires, as the highest priority, solutions commensurate with the seriousness and tenacity of the issues. These include, first, an international conference on finding ways to promote and bring about a massive return of refugees and expatriates to their respective homelands. The sponsorship, organization, financing and conduct of such a forum, preferably on African soil, would be entrusted to the United Nations and to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in close cooperation with the rest of the international community.

Such a conference would also take up the establishment of machinery most likely to guarantee national security for the elements of each country and regional security for the States of the Great Lakes taken as a whole. But security on this dual level will remain an unattained and unattainable dream so long as the major goal has not been achieved — or rather, so long as the first sine qua non condition has not been fulfilled: equitable power sharing providing the necessary balance among national communities. This is an inescapable condition, through which shared power, rather than slaking individual ambitions, would in fact end up serving as a reciprocal shield for the elements of each nation.

Over the last few weeks, world attention has been riveted to the unprecedented magnitude of the tragedy afflicting Kivu. Another human tragedy of great seriousness has wrongly been consigned to oblivion. Seven million Burundi citizens have been crushed under the suffocating weight of a total economic blockade for nearly four months now. While for two months the new regime has fully abided by all the conditions imposed by the Governments that imposed the embargo, and while the ministerial delegation dispatched last 18 October by the third Arusha summit had a high opinion of the negotiation plan the Head of State of Burundi proposed to his counterparts, our people continues to be sacrificed gratuitously and at great cost. This embargo contravenes the most fundamental norms of international law and the charters of both the United Nations and the OAU, and has subjected an entire nation to the throes of humiliation and death.

In September, October and November I transmitted to the successive Presidents of the Security Council and to the Secretary-General plethora of official documents demonstrating the complete determination of the present leaders to negotiate with all groups, including armed factions. The negotiations have since run up against the obstacles raised by the rebel camp. We wonder whether the architects of these economic sanctions are still inclined to find excuses for maintaining the embargo. Aside from the heavy tribute paid daily in numerous human lives — in particular by the hundreds of thousands of displaced persons — the refugees who are returning from Zaire by the thousands, fleeing the cataclysm abroad, are faced with tragic conditions in their own country, Burundi, and are being throttled by an embargo which is arbitrary in every way.

The repercussions on the plight of the Burundi refugees shed additional light on the interrelationship of which I spoke a while ago among the chronic causes of the crises which continue to batter the Great Lakes region and Burundi, which is situated at the crossroads of this inter-lake region. Our country has been willed by history and geography to participate as a full-fledged member in the settlement of conflicts there. At present my Government is limiting itself to making the Security Council aware of the problem of squaring the circle which, sooner or later, a multinational force will run up against if its mandate does not include the separation of former Rwandan soldiers and the *interahamwe* from innocent refugees.

In the view of my delegation, the primary task of the multinational force should be above all, to disarm the former Rwandese troops and at quartering them in areas remote from the Burundi-Rwanda-Zaire borders.

Without wishing to be a Cassandra, the Burundi delegation is obliged to warn that failing to carry out the task of disarming the former Rwandese troops could means a repetition of the monumental error committed in 1994 when the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) limited itself to standing by passively at the outbreak of the genocide, then packing up and fleeing at the height — at the very height — of that scourge.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Burundi for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Canada. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

**Mr. Fowler** (Canada) (*interpretation from French*): Yesterday, we were informed that 200,000 to 300,000 refugees were on the move over a 9-kilometre stretch of road in eastern Zaire. Today - fortunately - we know they were headed in the right direction. Nevertheless, the image conveyed by this and other, less auspicious, information from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is both familiar and shocking. It is familiar, in that it reminds us of the human suffering we witnessed in the same part of the world as recently as 1994, suffering and brutality of such intensity and on such a scale that it indeed could be said to approach the greatest horror of the twentieth century, the Holocaust.

Without any doubt, genocide had been perpetrated to devastating effect and, equally clearly, the international community failed to act to stop it. In the aftermath of the 7,000 or 8,000 people slaughtered for each of a hundred days in Rwanda, we again said, "Never again". We also said that we would improve the United Nations capacity to react, and we have begun to bring changes to the Organization's capacity to react quickly to crises by enhancing its ability to deploy rapidly.

Now, barely two years later, we are again witness to another human tragedy unfolding in the Great Lakes region. A million and a half people in dire need have for the past few weeks been suffering from our inability to come to their assistance.

The more fortunate, the better-cared-for and healthier members of the refugee community in the Goma region may finally be going home, but we must bear in mind that we have completely lost track of hundreds of thousands of people dispersed in the mountains and forests of eastern Zaire. Those people have been suffering a far more cruel fate than those who were crossing the Rwandese border today. They are, by all accounts, in truly desperate shape. Food and medicine sit idly in storage, close at hand yet out of reach of the needy, for aid agencies are being prevented from accomplishing their tasks by armed men who seek to use the pain and suffering of non-combatants for political and military purposes.

In its resolution 1078 (1996) of seven days ago, the Security Council stated clearly that the countries in the region had a responsibility to create the conditions necessary for the speedy and peaceful resolution of the crisis. The Council also declared that the international community needed urgently to act.

Our Prime Minister has done so, with the strong support of the Canadian people. One of the results of the consultations he has held with a score of world leaders and international organizations, including the Organization of African Unity, is Canada's decision to take a substantial role in mounting a multinational humanitarian intervention force to make possible the safe delivery of humanitarian aid and to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of refugees — that is, to save lives.

*(spoke in English)*

We did not set out to lead this mission, but we have been gratified by the response from Member States when it appeared that an offer of leadership might get such a force into the field. We bring to this task a combination of capacity, compassion and commitment. In announcing our wish to assist, Prime Minister Chrétien explained to Canadians that, while Canada may not be a super-Power, we remain a nation that speaks on the international scene with moral authority. We believe that this is why the international community has responded to the lead taken by our Prime Minister.

We have no illusions about the risks and difficulties involved, but we are absolutely convinced that there is no alternative but to act. When we said, "Never again", we meant it.

Canada cannot begin to act alone in such circumstances. Clearly, we need not even contemplate doing so. Countries are responding generously to the Secretary-General's call to action in eastern Zaire. A critical mass is already in place. Over 20 countries have already committed over 10,000 troops. While the main body of troops committed to date are from France, the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada, we now

have firm offers from Europe, North America, Africa and Latin America, as well as expressions of interest from Asia.

In addition, we are only a little less encouraged by our efforts to find donors to contribute to the United Nations trust fund that is being established to support the participation of African countries. More help in this area, however, is urgently required from those who can afford such contributions but who are not able to provide direct assistance.

We now know that we have enough to do the basic job. But putting together the multinational force is still a work in progress. We need additional elements if that force is to have the proper balance and the maximum desired impact on the ground and to allow it to prepare the way for follow-on forces.

We are especially grateful for the firm offer of battalions from Senegal, Ethiopia and Malawi. African participation in the multinational force is, of course, of vital importance to its legitimacy and to its effectiveness. Regional leaders and the Organization of African Unity have played key roles in responding to crises in Central Africa, and their advice and support in launching this effort will be crucial. We welcome their vital involvement in this mission.

Such participation is, as we know so well, extremely expensive, and we urge as many other countries as possible to assist African countries to bear these costs and, in addition, to provide the strategic transport and equipment that will be required by our African partners in this venture. Few countries are truly capable in the field of strategic transport, and we will be relying heavily on their generosity and commitment in the coming days. Finally, we could use a good deal of fairly sophisticated medical support and would welcome offers in this area.

Lieutenant-General Maurice Baril, the former Military Adviser to the Secretary-General, who now commands the Canadian Army, and who would lead this multinational force, met yesterday with representatives of more than 70 countries to discuss the concept of operations for the proposed mission.

Let us be clear about what the countries that make up the force are seeking to accomplish. Let us be realistic in our expectations. This force, as noted in paragraph 3 of the draft resolution before us, will facilitate the immediate return of humanitarian organizations and the effective delivery by civilian relief organizations of humanitarian aid to alleviate the immediate suffering of displaced persons, refugees and civilians at risk in eastern Zaire, and to facilitate the voluntary, orderly repatriation of refugees by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as well as the voluntary return of displaced persons. It will do no more and no less.

We do not, therefore, envisage disarmament or interposition as elements of the force's mandate. Indeed, disarmament cannot be part of this mandate. If it were, we would require a much larger and more robust force and would need to engage in a war with those who most evidently do not wish to be disarmed. Such a war would bring enormous and immediate harm to the very people we are seeking to save, as the elements with guns continue to find sanctuary within the refugee population that they continue to hold hostage.

In addition, soldiers engaged in disarmament could not undertake their primary and immediate mission, which is to make possible the delivery of humanitarian assistance. If soldiers are fighting, they cannot also be widely dispersed in humanitarian operations. Put simply, our intention is to concentrate on the urgent and the achievable: to save lives, rather than to make a vain and necessarily imperfect attempt to address all the problems of the region.

The proposed multinational force does not constitute all of the international community's efforts to bring peace and stability to Central Africa. The force would be deployed for four months, and the transition from it to a longer-term United Nations operation must be carefully thought out. A civil component, including direct United Nations involvement, is envisaged alongside the force, in order to help establish the conditions that must underlie any long-term solution, including engendering respect for human rights and for justice in the region.

The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Raymond Chrétien, is already engaged in addressing the underlying causes of the conflict and is offering advice to the Secretary-General on the longer-term role the United Nations might play in the region. If we are successful in our humanitarian mission, this second task would focus primarily on civilian peace-building, including political reconciliation and the reinforcement of the institutions of civil society. This is absolutely essential if the age-old hatred that has fuelled endless, bitter and bloody conflicts in Central Africa is to

yield to a willingness to coexist, and if the cycle of violence in the Great Lakes region is to be broken.

Indeed, the welcome prospect of the imminent return of large numbers of refugees to Rwanda adds both urgency and immediacy to this process of rebuilding. There will be an urgent requirement for donors, agencies and programmes to coordinate their efforts with a view to ensuring that development activities are tightly focused on buttressing the orderly and peaceful return of these refugees. They will need shelter, health care and a wide variety of other assistance in order to reintegrate smoothly into Rwandese society. They will also need understanding and compassion from the Government and people of Rwanda. Canada will play a full part in helping to facilitate this huge development challenge. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada, Lloyd Axworthy, has announced the establishment of the Canadian Peace-building Framework to assist with projects of this kind in the area. We encourage other donors to consider similar initiatives.

Despite the heartening news that up to one third of the Rwandese refugees in Zaire may finally be going home, people will continue to die in eastern Zaire in appalling numbers and their presence there will continue to destabilize the region. Close to 1 million refugees will remain at risk in Zaire, even if the reports of current refugee flows into Gisenye are fully accurate.

The international community is clearly ready to act, and to act now. In our judgement, therefore, the international will now exists for the formation and dispatch of a multinational force. The Government of Canada is prepared to work diligently with other Governments to enable the effective deployment of a temporary humanitarian operation in eastern Zaire. I urge the Security Council to authorize such an operation, and without delay.

**The President:** I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Argentina and Mali in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

*At the invitation of the President, Ms. Ramírez (Argentina) and Mr. Sow (Mali) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.*

**The President:** Argentina and Mali have also joined as sponsors of the draft resolution contained in document S/1996/943.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I shall first call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

**Mr. Dejammet** (France) (*interpretation from French*): The countries of the Great Lakes region are threatened by a humanitarian catastrophe. The disturbances that have taken place in eastern Zaire have caused the exodus of 1.2 million refugees and displaced persons. Humanitarian agencies have left the region.

Since the beginning of these tragic events, the French Government has called for an urgent response from the international community. It proposed the deployment in eastern Zaire of a multinational force for strictly humanitarian purposes. On 7 November 1996 the Secretary-General sent a letter to the Security Council recommending the deployment of such an operation. The Organization of African Unity came out in favour of such a project.

Resolution 1078 (1996), which was adopted on 9 November 1996, actively committed Member States urgently to make the necessary preparations for the formation of this force. That resolution marked the starting point for the mobilization of the international community. The draft resolution that we shall adopt today will finally authorize the establishment of this multinational force, and we hope that its first elements will be deployed over the next few days.

This force, in which France will participate, has a strictly humanitarian mandate. Its principal mission is to allow the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance for refugees and displaced persons and, to this end, to promote the return to eastern Zaire of the humanitarian organizations. The objective of this force is also to

facilitate the voluntary return of refugees and displaced persons; indeed, the ultimate goal is the free return of refugees and displaced persons to their country and region of origin.

The establishment of this multinational force would not have been possible if Canada had not made the courageous decision to agree to lead it and to begin preparations to that end. As others have done and will do, we commend Canada's generous offer, which, we are pleased to say, will bring together under its command several American, European and African contingents. France is particularly concerned that resources be provided to the Africans so that they can fully participate in this humanitarian mission. It is for this reason that we have continued to call for consultations with the Organization of African Unity.

The multinational force will be in place for a maximum period of four months, which can be reduced if the Council so decides. The force should be followed by another operation, most likely a United Nations operation, whose mandate will be specifically to pursue the humanitarian work that will begin in the next few days. We hope that all of these efforts will provide such help as is necessary to stabilize the region and to begin, finally to bring about a lasting solution to the problems that have afflicted the Great Lakes region for more than two years now.

But everyone has become aware of the need to deal with all the region's problems at the negotiating table, with the support of all interested countries.

I have heard at that table rather passionate arguments — an understandable emotional reaction to a great deal of injustice. But I have also heard measured and responsible comments. It is this exchange of views that allows us to hope that dialogue among the countries of the region will be fully resumed and that understanding and reconciliation will replace incomprehension, psychosis and devastation.

We can also work together for reconciliation — a hope that was expressed earlier by one of us at this table. Europe has known its share of war, and now it is experiencing a period of reconciliation and pacification. Why not do for Africa, through an international conference, what was done for Europe, which restored peace to devastated areas? That is why the French Government, as everyone is well aware, has repeatedly called for the convening of an international conference on peace, security and development in the Great Lakes region. We are pleased to note that this proposal has been formally endorsed, and on the terms I have just cited, by the Organization of African Unity. The Security Council — in the draft resolution that is before us and of which France is a sponsor — has once again emphasized the need for such a conference. The Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Raymond Chrétien, has been mandated by resolution 1078 (1996) to speed up preparations. We hope that the Special Envoy's efforts, as well as our own, will allow for the early convening of this conference. It is the only truly peaceful and reasonable means for finally, as each of us hopes, bringing about the reign of peace and understanding in the Great Lakes region.

**Sir John Weston** (United Kingdom): There is no disputing the gravity and complexity of the crisis that has erupted in eastern Zaire. It is one of the largest and most challenging tasks the United Nations has faced. The potential for a humanitarian catastrophe is real. The international community has a moral obligation to help where we can, and to do so urgently.

We pay tribute to Canada for offering to take on the leadership role in the organization of a multinational force. The United Kingdom is ready to play a full part in this. We cosponsored the draft resolution before us, and we intend to vote in favour of it. We have been actively involved in contingency planning since the Council adopted resolution 1078 (1996). A multinational force is not a panacea, but it must be able to meet the task we are setting for it. What we need is a properly balanced force, of a size adequate to the task and with a clear and achievable mandate. In such a force let there be no doubt that the British contribution would be substantial and prominent. As the British Defence Secretary told our Parliament yesterday, we recognize our obligations in the face of such a call to action. We are among the relatively few nations with the military capability to help, and we are proud that the British armed forces can make a difference. A British military reconnaissance team has already gone to the region to assess the conditions on the ground.

The deployment of a multinational force is the only feasible option if we are to get people on the ground quickly. But it is important to recognize the temporary nature of this operation. It is an immediate response to an immediate crisis. It is also essential that the United Nations start work immediately on preparations for the necessary follow-on operation, in the context of an

international humanitarian task force, so that this follow-on force is ready to take over before the mandate of the multinational force expires, at the latest on 31 March 1997.

We also need to ensure that these immediate actions do not render the longer-term tasks more difficult. We do not want the previous unhappy situation, which led directly to the present crisis, to occur again. This deployment must not freeze the situation as it is, nor set back the efforts over the last two years to resolve the complex humanitarian situation in the region. Any serious attempt to meet the humanitarian crisis and to prevent further suffering must try to ensure that those refugees who want to return to their homes are not prevented from doing so by armed gangs or intimidators. Nor should this operation result in the re-establishment of camps in which armed elements are allowed to operate. We agree with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees that the force should be able to ensure the exclusively humanitarian and civilian character of all refugee locations under the multinational force's control. This means it should be sufficiently large, and sufficiently well-equipped, to do the job properly.

The geographical scope of the operation must also be matched to the force's capability. Many of the refugees have now spread out into the less-accessible areas of eastern Zaire. This could reduce the effectiveness of an operation limited purely to Goma and Bukavu.

This crisis affects the region as a whole. The Governments of the region recognized this at their Summit in Nairobi on 5 November and made clear their willingness to play a full part in helping to resolve the crisis. A successful operation needs the full strategic consent of all the Governments concerned. As far as possible, it also need the acquiescence of the various militias active in the area.

We believe that participation and cooperation by African States is very important. By authorizing the establishment of a multinational force, the Security Council is responding to African calls for a neutral force to alleviate the suffering and to promote the return of refugees. We hope that African States will play an important role in the multinational force and in the follow-on force that will succeed this operation. It is also important that they participate actively in the planning for both forces from the outset.

All States can help in this endeavour. We look to those nations that are not providing troops to do everything they can to support it. We encourage them to contribute urgently to the Secretary-General's voluntary trust fund, which is established by this draft resolution.

I said that the multinational force was not a panacea. It cannot resolve the problems of the region. The political dimension of this crisis remains paramount in order to achieve a lasting solution. We believe the regional Governments have a key role to play in this, and we welcome the lead that they took at the Nairobi Summit.

We must help Rwanda create the conditions which are necessary to encouraging the refugees to return, including by increasing the number of human rights monitors working there. As the largest bilateral donor to the Rwanda Human Rights programme, Britain is playing a leading role in this, and we encourage others to do so, too.

We agree with the point just made by the Ambassador of France that a Great Lakes conference would have a central role to play in securing a peaceful and stable future for the region. We agree that preparations should begin for such a conference under the auspices of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). It is only right that the OAU should be closely involved in the search for a lasting political solution in the region.

The United Nations has suffered some setbacks in recent years. It is right that we should learn the lessons of past mistakes. Now we face, in the challenge presented by the crisis in eastern Zaire, a new call to live up to the aims and ideals of the United Nations Charter. There are pitfalls. We should not underestimate the risks and the difficulties. Thorough preparation and planning, a clear mandate, achievable objectives and renewed efforts to reach a long-term political settlement are essential. But we should take encouragement from the rapid and effective work here at United Nations Headquarters over recent days and from the political signal that the unanimous adoption of this Security Council resolution will send. What we are setting in motion today will, I trust, show that the United Nations and its Member States are able to make a difference and that we have the courage and determination to do so.

It was once well said that the only real reason for doing something is that it is the right thing to do. All the others are reasons for doing nothing. The United Kingdom believes that, with the course charted by this draft resolution, the United Nations is doing the right thing.

**Mr. Qin Huasun** (China) *(interpretation from Chinese):* Since the latter part of October, violence and conflict have been escalating in eastern Zaire, resulting in a large-scale humanitarian crisis arousing the concern of the international community.

The Chinese delegation is gravely concerned and disturbed by the renewed fighting and the displacement of millions of refugees in the Great Lakes region.

We appeal to the parties concerned to cease immediately all hostile actions, ensure the safety of the lives and property of refugees and innocent civilians and guarantee the smooth delivery out of international humanitarian assistance so as to create conditions for the voluntary and orderly repatriation of the refugees and lay the foundation for a political settlement in the Great Lakes region.

The Chinese delegation believes that the international community, including the Security Council, is duty-bound to settle the present crisis in the Great Lakes region. The present task is to defuse the humanitarian crisis. In this regard, we have noted the communiqué of the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution and the letter from its Secretary General, His Excellency Mr. Salim Ahmed. We appreciate and support the African countries and the OAU in their efforts to resolve the present crisis with the help of the international community.

We believe that it is very necessary to provide emergency humanitarian assistance to the refugees in eastern Zaire in view of the fact that Zaire and its neighbouring countries have already agreed to the deployment of the multinational humanitarian force. We will respect the requests of Zaire, the African countries and the OAU.

The Chinese delegation will therefore vote in favour of the draft resolution.

The Chinese delegation believes that international military intervention in eastern Zaire involves many complicated and sensitive questions. Therefore, when carrying out such an intervention the following principles should be observed. First, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries concerned, particularly Zaire, should be respected and there should be no interference in the internal affairs of these countries. Secondly, before initiating this action, there should be full consultations with the States concerned and their consent obtained. Full cooperation should be provided during implementation. Thirdly, this action should be strictly confined to humanitarian purposes. Fourthly, since the intervention is authorized by the Security Council, the Security Council's political guidance must be accepted. Furthermore, there should be a clear time-frame and terms of reference. I should also like to point out here that the action mandated by the draft resolution is strictly confined to humanitarian purposes. We therefore have reservations about invoking Chapter VII of the Charter.

The Chinese delegation believes that speedy and smooth repatriation and settlement of the refugee question are the bases for the settlement of the question of the Great Lakes region.

We understand the complexity of the refugee issue in this region, but so long as the parties involved are sincerely making serious efforts, with the help of the international community, all problems, including the issue of refugees, should in the end be effectively settled.

The Great Lakes region has long witnessed chaos. All countries face the task of consolidating peace and economic reconstruction. Therefore, maintaining good-neighbourly relations is vitally important to all countries. We hope that all countries in the region will adhere to the principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs, the settlement of disputes through consultations based on equality, and non-use of force in relations between countries. In this way, they will be able to remove interference, overcome difficulties and achieve peace and stability in the Great Lakes region.

**Mr. Legwaila** (Botswana): The authorization of the deployment of a multinational force for the Great Lakes region is probably the most important decision to be taken by the Security Council on the situation in that area. The draft resolution the Council is about to adopt strikes a delicate balance between what is desirable and what is achievable in the complex situation currently prevailing in eastern Zaire. The most important and immediate action is the need to gain access to the refugees and displaced persons so that the international humanitarian community can render them assistance. The deployment of the force will certainly avert what was likely to become a human tragedy of immense proportions. The international community had to do something or its conscience would for ever be troubled by the results of its inaction.

It is in view of this reality that Botswana commends the Government and the people of Canada for their decision to take the lead in establishing and commanding a multinational force to respond to the humanitarian situation in eastern Zaire. We have become accustomed to Canada's exemplary leadership and outstanding courage in peacekeeping operations, but we certainly do not take them for granted.

Botswana is pleased that the Security Council is in a position to take a decision on the deployment of a multinational force within a week after it adopted resolution 1078 (1996). This action will hopefully save hundreds of thousands of lives and give hope to many more who have been crying out for help in the wilderness. We are happy to join the consensus in support of the draft resolution.

Botswana welcomes the establishment of a trust fund to help African States that are willing to contribute to the humanitarian operation. It is important that African States, especially the States neighbouring Zaire, should be involved in the operation. The response of the countries of the region as reflected in the communiqué of the summit meeting held at Nairobi, Kenya, on 5 November 1996 drew the attention of the international community to the unfortunate situation that has been unfolding in eastern Zaire. It is significant that the States affected by the situation in eastern Zaire have called for the establishment of safe corridors and the deployment of an international force to ensure access to displaced persons and refugees by the international humanitarian personnel. It is therefore our hope that the international community will respond in a generous and timely manner to enable African States to participate in the humanitarian operation.

The situation in eastern Zaire is not simply a refugee problem. It is in reality a political problem which requires a political solution. The prolonged stay of the refugees in camps in Zaire is a source of insecurity and instability to the country of asylum; even worse, it is a serious threat to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Zaire. The refugee camps have become recruitment grounds for those determined to train and equip an army to fight against the Government of Rwanda. This can only lead to increased tension along the Rwanda-Zaire border and transform what began as an internal conflict into an inter-State conflict with far-reaching regional ramifications. We are convinced therefore that a long-term solution to the prevailing situation lies in the return of the refugees to their communes in Rwanda. We welcome the fact that some refugees have spontaneously begun a journey to their homeland. It is still essential to ensure that they have immediate access to food, water and medicine and can return in safety and dignity.

As far as we are concerned, the primary objective of the international community should be the repatriation of all the refugees to their country of origin. The Government of Rwanda has declared its commitment to welcome the refugees. The international community should now work in close collaboration with Rwanda to create conditions inside that country which would be conducive to the voluntary return of the refugees. The international community should be prepared to provide financial and material resources to help Rwanda resettle the returnees. Most of the difficulties experienced by the returnees centre around property disputes. There is an urgent need to help them build new homes. It must be clear to the Government of Rwanda that the refugees will judge the Government's public statements on the basis of what happens on the ground. In this respect, the international community has a role to play in assuring the returnees of their safety and security. It is our hope that the Government of Rwanda will be ready to welcome and cooperate with an increased international presence.

It has been established beyond a reasonable doubt that the former Rwandese Government forces and the *interahamwe* are preventing the refugees from exercising their right to return voluntarily. The international community should not and cannot ignore this reality, which goes against the fundamental legal principle of voluntary repatriation. It would be wrong to insist on the right of refugees to return on a voluntary basis while ignoring or doing nothing about the actions of those who obstruct the freedom of the refugees to exercise that legitimate right.

Botswana strongly supports the mission of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to the Great Lakes region. We look forward to his recommendations on the modalities for convening an international conference on peace, security and development. We underscore the need for sound preparations to pave the way for serious negotiations on concrete issues. The Great Lakes region has experienced so much bloodshed that the United Nations cannot afford to organize a conference that would generate heat rather than light and offer no solutions to the urgent problems facing the region. This is not the time for endless debates on the merits or demerits of convening such a conference. The time has come for all people of goodwill to work towards negotiations aimed at finding a permanent political settlement to the problems of the Great Lakes region.

The international community should be ready to guarantee a balanced outcome and the effective implementation of the agreed commitments within a specific time-frame. We encourage the countries of the region to offer concrete proposals on the issues the conference should address. Botswana is optimistic and has confidence in the capacity of the region to rise to the challenge of the moment. The leaders of the region have demonstrated the political will to coordinate and harmonize their positions in confronting the difficulties facing their countries and peoples. And they have the unswerving support of my delegation in this endeavour.

**Mr. Henze** (Germany): The constantly deteriorating situation, the great human suffering and the fate of more than one million refugees in the Great Lakes region have for quite some time been a matter of deep concern to my Government.

My Government fully supports the decision the Security Council is about to take to authorize the establishment for humanitarian purposes of a temporary multinational force. It fully shares the sense of urgency that has guided the actions of the Security Council so far. Germany will therefore vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Allow me on behalf of my Government to commend the Canadian Government for its brave initiative to organize and command such an operation. I also wish to pay tribute to all the nations that are ready to commit themselves to take part in this operation.

My Government, like others, is of the opinion that all efforts undertaken by the international community in the region of the Great Lakes should also address prominently the underlying causes of the conflicts, in particular the problem of the continued presence of hundreds of thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons in eastern Zaire and elsewhere in the region. For that reason, we welcome the fact that the multinational force that is to be authorized will not only facilitate the immediate return of humanitarian organizations and the effective delivery of humanitarian aid to those in need, but will also facilitate the voluntary and orderly repatriation of refugees by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the voluntary return of displaced persons.

In this context, my Government also welcomes the announcement by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Kofi Annan, yesterday that the Secretariat intends to start to plan in a timely manner a follow-on operation which, as foreseen in Security Council resolution 1078 (1996) part C, and paragraph 12 of the draft resolution before us, will help, *inter alia*, to continue assisting UNHCR with the protection and voluntary repatriation of refugees and displaced persons, including through the establishment of humanitarian corridors.

Germany remains committed to providing funding for the urgently needed delivery of humanitarian assistance. Together with the United States of America, we have been the most significant donor of humanitarian assistance in the region. In addition to considerable bilateral contributions, Germany has also contributed more than 30 per cent of the budget for the humanitarian assistance delivered by the European Union.

It is our conviction that the international community will have to assist in finding lasting and sustainable solutions to the underlying causes of the conflicts in the region of the Great Lakes, beyond the urgent action on which the Security Council is about to take a decision. This requires not only a guarantee of the security of the refugees at their points of arrival, but also a real chance for those who were not involved in the genocide to be fully reintegrated into their respective home communities.

Germany therefore remains committed to efforts aimed at improving conditions for the return of refugees to their country of origin, in particular by enhancing the economic and social situation there through rehabilitation and development aid and by assisting in the protection of human rights.

There can be no solution if the countries of the region do not cooperate. It is, above all, their responsibility to bring about peace in the region and to create the conditions for economic and social development. We welcome the decisions taken at the Nairobi Regional Summit as a first step and continue to urge the countries to meet at the regional conference to lay the foundation for lasting peace and stability.

**Mr. Park** (Republic of Korea): The international community has been extremely disheartened and alarmed at the tragic developments in eastern Zaire over the last few weeks. Hundreds of thousands of displaced refugees and inhabitants are facing the danger of mass death by starvation. The creation of secure conditions for the immediate delivery of humanitarian assistance in order to provide food, shelter and security to the displaced

persons is urgently called for. The consequences of failing to do so would be stark and tragic. The looming humanitarian catastrophe, unless tackled properly by the international community now, is bound to have serious consequences, threatening peace and security in the entire Great Lakes region.

My delegation highly appreciates the valiant and expeditious efforts of the Canadian Government in taking the lead and ensuring broad participation by the international community in the formation of a temporary multinational force to facilitate the effective delivery of humanitarian aid and the voluntary, orderly and safe repatriation of refugees. We also pay a resounding tribute to Africa's readiness to contribute troops to the proposed international force, as declared by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on 11 November, and to all other members of the international community that have pledged their firm commitment to this noble humanitarian cause. The Republic of Korea is poignantly reminded of the responsibility that each and every member of the international community must assume in the face of such an impending humanitarian disaster as we are now witnessing in the Great Lakes region. In this regard, I wish to state that my Government stands ready duly to contribute to the cause of the multinational force. In expressing our full support for the immediate deployment of a multinational force on a temporary basis in the Great Lakes region, we would like to add a few observations.

First, the task of the multinational force will by no means be easy because of the insecure environment in which it has to operate. It will therefore be of paramount importance that all parties concerned provide the fullest cooperation to the multilateral force. We strongly urge them not to stand in the way of the multinational operation on any pretext or in any way whatsoever.

Secondly, we would like to underline that the precarious situation in the Great Lakes region does not allow room for partial solutions. We believe that the second part of the mandate of the multinational force, namely facilitating the voluntary and orderly repatriation of refugees, is particularly essential because any long-term solution to the complex problems in the region would be inconceivable without the repatriation of refugees to their country of origin. In addition, although we understand the difficulty and the risk of translating into reality the need to separate people who are intimidating others from bona fide refugees, we still believe that every possible avenue should be explored in the course of the multinational operation to help facilitate the non-enforced and gradual separation of refugees. My delegation is confident that the multinational force will mark the beginning of a solution to the multifaceted problems from which the Great Lakes region has been suffering for many years.

Thirdly, in devising the operational plan for the repatriation of refugees, I fully agree with views on the importance of the treatment the first refugees voluntarily returning to their home countries will receive, as pointed out by the representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) at yesterday's briefing. We have to make every effort to ensure that conditions in their home countries will be acceptable for those first returnees so that other refugees who are more cautious or hesitant to return will be encouraged to follow suit.

Fourthly, we believe that the international community, building upon the valuable momentum to be created by the painstaking efforts of the States participating in the multinational force, should take timely and appropriate follow-up action as envisaged in the draft resolution and through the convening of an international conference as set out in resolution 1078 (1996). In this regard, we look forward to the recommendations that the Secretary-General will make after undertaking the necessary preparation with Member States and relevant organizations.

In concluding, we would like to express our sincere hope that the operation of the planned multinational force will achieve the objectives of resuming urgently humanitarian relief and paving the way for the repatriation of refugees within the planned timetable and framework. My delegation, as one of the sponsors, will vote in favour of the draft resolution before the Council.

**Mr. Gomaa** (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Egypt, has followed the deteriorating situation in the Great Lakes region with great concern and regret. This is an important region for Egypt, as the time-honoured ties we enjoy with its people are as old as the Nile. Thus, during recent months and weeks, we have agonized over this humanitarian tragedy, which has such far-reaching dimensions.

Egypt has taken part in intensified endeavours within the African framework to find a way to break this stalemate, within the context of African brotherhood and African values and based on our full belief in the importance of the role of Africa, through the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and its Mechanism

for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. The latter issued a communiqué at the Fourth Extraordinary Session of its Central Organ, held in Addis Ababa on 11 November, in which it referred to elements involved in the current international consensus on settling this difficult problem. I refer here to the need to play a more effective role at the international level — which means sending a multinational force and ensuring the flow of necessary humanitarian aid to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of refugees on the basis of full respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Zaire — and to the need for a broad African participation in any multinational force. It is no secret that widening African participation will depend on the mobilization of resources, on a reliable and sustainable basis, through the voluntary trust fund that was established for this purpose, as well as through other channels.

My delegation pays tribute to the initiatives that were undertaken in response to the gravity of the situation, beginning with the French initiative — which has formed the basis of the action taken by the Security Council and its adoption of resolution 1078 (1996) — as well as the Canadian initiative, which a number of countries took part in putting into effect in the Council. The Canadian initiative provides a well-defined framework for the creation of a temporary force to achieve an urgent, clear, humanitarian objective, and at the same time reaffirms the importance of African participation in this force.

We therefore think that, as far as the Security Council's debate in recent days is concerned, the action is compatible with the African viewpoint within the Organization of African Unity. Accordingly, we wholeheartedly support the draft resolution (S/1996/943). Egypt will vote in favour of this draft resolution, of which it is a sponsor.

Guinea-Bissau and Botswana have also given their support, as well as other brotherly African countries, most importantly Zaire — which may shoulder the biggest share of suffering — and Cameroon, which is the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity.

At the same time, the Egyptian delegation has followed what has been said by the representative of brotherly Rwanda on the latest positive developments in the return in great numbers of refugees to their homes. We feel happy for and pay tribute to this development. At the same time, we think that adopting the current draft resolution does not at all contradict these efforts or the developments that we hope will be enhanced in a way that will alleviate and end the current tragedy and suffering.

In this connection, it is worth noting that the proposed multinational force is a temporary force and is limited in scope. Its nature and mandate presuppose the full and sincere cooperation of all the countries of the region. It will ultimately reflect a responsible awareness of the dimensions of the tragedy and the need to find a solution to it.

We hope that this force will eventually realize its objective smoothly and in the shortest possible time, in a way that will consolidate the efforts at reconciliation among the countries of the region at a conference on the Great Lakes region to be held under the auspices of the United Nations, and will ensure the growth of their economies and the achievement of prosperity for their peoples.

**Mr. Cabral** (Guinea-Bissau) (*interpretation from French*): Over the past 50 years, the Security Council has had its great moments. We believe that this evening's meeting will be among those that have best contributed to giving the concept of collective responsibility its true meaning. However, our meeting this evening will have above all contributed to making the Security Council that prestigious assembly to which millions of human beings turn and upon which often depends the survival of millions of human beings like you and me, Sir. The meeting this evening will have contributed to giving out Council a human face and a soul.

We have listened very attentively and with great respect to the statements made here by the countries involved — Zaire, Rwanda and Burundi — but also to those made by all the other members of the Council. We have above all listened very carefully to the statement by the representative of Canada, a most enlightening and courageous statement. We salute the delegation of Canada which has taken a stand in favour of the survival of that part of humanity formed by the populations living in misery today in eastern Zaire.

A short time ago the representative of Zaire dwelt on the circumstances prevailing in his country, a most regrettable situation whose precariousness is difficult to exaggerate. However, I think that we need to remember from what he said that Zaire, an African country we all respect, has always been committed to championing the human condition. Because I believe that this evening it is indeed the human condition that is at stake.

I think, as has been said here, that apart from the emotions and resentments — which are sometimes justified — we first need to focus on the desire to achieve a solution in which human rights will prevail.

We are living today in a world in which centres of tensions explode all over the globe as a result of racial hatred, the lack of tolerance, ethnic persecution, the absence of democratic rule and unbridled political ambition. These are the cause of confrontations and armed conflicts that unfortunately create an exodus of thousands of human beings who take to the roads: men, women, children and old people are left abandoned, adrift in despair wandering waves of humanity searching for safe — or supposedly safe — places, forced to survive crushed together, sometimes like cattle, in camps where the conditions were just described by our colleague from Zaire as subhuman.

These mass movements of people, in conditions that are difficult to control, hamper the socio-economic development of the host countries and give rise to the serious consequences we are deploring today. These consequences have serious implications for the security and stability of the countries involved, but also for regional and international security.

The events in eastern Zaire are a clear illustration of the reality that confronts us today. We are aware that the magnitude of the population movements is not confined to a humanitarian aspect. There is also a political aspect that would be difficult to ignore the major responsibility for which lies first and foremost with the countries involved.

Nevertheless, the assistance of the international community is indeed proving to be indispensable. This is why my delegation welcomes the holding of this meeting this evening, in which several other members of the United Nations are participating. This is indeed a collective responsibility, which we have decided to shoulder.

My country today is more convinced than ever that the efforts of the international community, and above all the efforts of the competent bodies of the United Nations, must be more sharply focused, with much greater determination and political will, on the major causes of the flow of refugees and displaced persons. The creation of a healthier socio-economic and political environment, as well as the installation of political regimes that respect human rights, including the creation of institutions based on the principle of the primacy of law, justice and the equality of citizens, are fundamental conditions for the mass exodus of refugees and displaced persons to be halted.

We believe that the countries involved must create conditions conducive to the voluntary repatriation of refugees and to the return of the displaced persons to their permanent homes in full safety and dignity.

Since 1994, the Great Lakes region has unfortunately become the greatest hotbed of tension and inter-ethnic confrontation in the recent experience of Africa. The assassination of the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi exacerbated political violence and stepped up the conflicts in these countries in addition to causing a massive tidal wave of displaced persons and refugees into neighbouring countries. This deplorable situation is at the root of the present situation and has resulted in the consequences we are seeing today in eastern Zaire in horrifying television images, as though broadcasters had committed themselves to reminding us, as is in fact their duty, that in other places, somewhere over there in Africa, a part of humankind is suffering and that their suffering is a matter for our universal conscience.

Thousands of people — men, women, children and the elderly — deprived of their properties, their land, and their livestock, deprived of everything, have fled their country of origin seeking a safe place to survive. Today those people are somewhere in the forest because they have preferred this to the hostility of their compatriots, of their very brothers, who have decided to massacre them in the name of ethnic "superiority", which we condemn. These people have preferred to live among wild animals, no matter how dangerous it is, rather than risk the brutal instincts of their compatriots. For at least three weeks now, we have been witnessing this intolerable tragedy, which, according to the estimates of Doctors without Borders, has been causing more than 1,200 deaths a day. One might wonder why the Security Council was unable to take a decision three weeks ago. Of course, there are reasons why the Security Council was not able to intervene as we would have hoped, but we need to welcome the fact that today, at last, we have the opportunity to adopt a draft resolution in keeping with the wishes of millions of suffering human beings in that part of Africa, in that part of the world, which is part of our common humanity.

There are those who wonder whether there is a double standard in the application of international humanitarian law. Is respect for human rights and humanitarian law in Zaire, somewhere over there in

Africa, not as important as when we need to intervene elsewhere, in other latitudes? We would like to hope that this is completely untrue and that, as we have said, Zairians, Rwandese, Burundians — Africans — are all human beings and that we all not only deserve the attention of the Security Council but, above all, we deserve having the international community as a whole ponder our fate as human beings.

It is true that the Security Council will at last be adopting a draft resolution that will finally authorize the deployment of a multinational force to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid. But in the meantime, is there not also reason to ask how many individuals we could have saved? Three weeks ago, Ms. Ogata presented a horrendous report on the plight of millions of human beings in that part of the world. That report, moreover, was largely backed by the statements of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General and above all by what the Secretary-General himself said to us to prompt us to act: that, given the urgency of the situation, we must put aside our differences and act as the circumstances demand, by giving the Security Council a soul, a human face.

This is why we welcome the stage at which we have finally arrived. We welcome the contributions of all delegations sitting around this table. Finally, we welcome the fact that a decision has been taken to do something to help alleviate the torment and suffering of an entire people. When I say a people, I mean simply the African people, because when a Zairian, a Rwandese or a Burundian is suffering, when he prefers to wander in the forest or to die rather than be killed or massacred, then we simply think — in our country, Guinea-Bissau, but also in Algeria, Tunisia, South Africa — that it is an African who is dying, a part of ourselves. This is why we welcome the fact that, finally, we have decided to render our assistance to put an end to the misery in that country.

We thank the Secretary-General for his tireless efforts, which are commensurate with his responsibilities. These responsibilities give whoever presides over the fate of the United Nations the authority and the full weight of the Charter. We are proud to have an African to guide the destiny of the United Nations in these times, which are so difficult for Africa.

We also thank the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which has met many times to address, responsibly and with respect for human rights, the situation prevailing in eastern Zaire. But when we say eastern Zaire, we are not suggesting that what is taking place in that region of Africa is a merely Zairian situation. There can be no question of that. This is a situation in an African country and, fortunately, we here have all agreed to remember the need to respect the boundaries it inherited from the colonial period. Those boundaries were formally sanctioned by the charter of the OAU, which, through the principle of the inviolability of borders, has ensured that we in Africa respect our neighbours and that we live and coexist in friendship and cooperation. Furthermore, we are pleased that the representative of Zaire reminded us here that for more than 30 years now peaceful coexistence, friendship and cooperation have dominated the lives of the brother peoples who live in that region of the African continent.

We hope that that same coexistence, those virtues which the African peoples hold so dear, will win out, and that, on the basis of respect for borders, of the need for respect for one another and for our political regimes, we will be able to work towards the advent of an Africa without the misery that we deplore.

We welcome the intervention of the Organization of African Unity. We would also like this evening to express our gratitude to the countries of the Great Lakes region, which have made tireless efforts to enable dialogue to prevail, and to enable understanding and harmony to reign as the fundamental principles for this region of the African continent.

We would like to thank the members of the Security Council that took the initiative to present this draft resolution, I am thinking in particular of the German delegation, which, it must be said, took the initiative some three weeks ago. We are also thinking of the French delegation which, with determination and intelligence, sought to remind us of our shared humanity. And, of course, we thank the Canadian Government which, as was stated earlier, had the courage to take the correct decision in taking on the leadership as circumstances required to serve our shared destiny — our shared humanity — in making the contribution the African peoples deserve: the peoples involved, who are our brothers and sisters.

This is why we believe that it is important for all of us around this table and for all who will be speaking later not only to lend their support but also to voice their determination to commit themselves to and support the multinational force, so that it will not only be born but will also contribute to solving the problem.

I declare here that my country, Guinea-Bissau, is ready to participate in the multinational force under the conditions and terms set out in the draft resolution which will be our responsibility and, above all, our great joy to adopt very soon. We believe that the adoption of this draft resolution will contribute to alleviating the suffering of those people, who nightly fix their gaze on New York in the hope that an end can finally be brought to their suffering.

We welcome the participation of a very large number of United Nations Member States in our deliberations this evening. When leaving this Chamber this evening,

(*spoke in English*)

we should all remember, as the Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges says, that "Each person is all persons".

**Mr. Wlosowicz** (Poland): The Polish delegation is going to vote in favour of the draft resolution authorizing Member States to conduct the operation of a multinational force to facilitate the immediate return of humanitarian organizations and the effective delivery of humanitarian aid in eastern Zaire, and to facilitate the voluntary, orderly repatriation of refugees and displaced persons. The objective of our action today is clear: not to let a great humanitarian catastrophe occur.

With the state of chaos reigning in eastern Zaire, urgently needed humanitarian aid cannot be delivered without assuring basic security. Therefore, we express our most sincere gratitude to the countries which have taken the initiative to organize the multinational force on an urgent basis and to contribute their troops to the operation. Our special thanks go to the Government of Canada for its brave and generous decision to lead the operation.

We truly believe that the draft resolution we are about to adopt will provide these countries and humanitarian organizations with the necessary framework in which to perform the tasks they have voluntarily undertaken.

My delegation believes that with the most immediate problems having been taken care of, the United Nations will have to step in, and we hope that the appropriate form for a United Nations presence will be decided soon.

We are fully aware that the operation cannot eliminate the structural sources of the crisis in the Great Lakes region. Such a task can be achieved only through the long-term intensive efforts of the countries concerned, regional African organizations and the international community as a whole. Yet we believe that the operation the Security Council is about to bring into being will contribute significantly to the achievement of a sustainable solution based on the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and the inviolability of the borders of all States concerned, as well as on respect for human rights.

In that context, I would like to stress that the African countries have a substantial role to play in all phases of the process, beginning with the humanitarian operation currently under discussion. We welcome the results of the Nairobi Regional Summit held on 5 November, and of the extraordinary session of the Central Organ of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, held on 11 November, which, in our view, constitute a step in that direction.

Without losing sight of the much broader picture, at this particular juncture we must help without delay to ease the human tragedy in eastern Zaire and to prove our solidarity with those who are suffering from hunger, thirst and disease. The draft resolution before us opens the way for action which is so dramatically called for.

**Mr. Martínez Blanco** (Honduras) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation would like to express its deep concern at the serious events in eastern Zaire, which have caused more than a million Burundian and Rwandese refugees to abandon their camps, thereby threatening peace and security in the Great Lakes region.

My delegation considers it necessary for the international community to take urgent measures to avoid the loss of thousands of human lives by hunger and disease. This means that ways and means must be found to stabilize the situation and to create conditions of security enabling humanitarian assistance to reach the region's refugees and displaced persons, whose situation results from armed conflict.

Accordingly, my delegation has sponsored and will vote in favour of the draft resolution before us, which authorizes a multinational humanitarian force to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid to displaced persons, refugees and civilians at risk in eastern Zaire, and to facilitate the repatriation of refugees and the voluntary return of displaced persons, coordinated by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

My delegation considers that for this to occur the parties to the conflict must declare a ceasefire, and we appeal to them to cease all hostilities forthwith and to initiate, as soon as possible, the necessary political dialogue with a view to resolving the present situation.

My delegation would like to reiterate its support for the Secretary-General's Special Envoy to the region and for the efforts of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the European Union, the States concerned and the results of the Regional Summit of African countries held at Nairobi on 5 November of this year. At the same time, we would also like to welcome the offer made by the Government of Canada and other Governments to provide personnel and equipment to set up the multinational force described in the draft resolution.

My delegation also wishes to emphasize the urgent need to convene an international conference on peace, security and development in the Great Lakes region under the auspices of the United Nations and the OAU to address and find lasting solutions to the problems of the Great Lakes region.

In conclusion, my delegation considers that this draft resolution sets forth suitable objectives, since it is focused on meeting the humanitarian needs of the refugees by deploying a neutral force and favours the establishment of a plan of action that will reduce tension in the region and ensure the voluntary repatriation of refugees.

**Mr. Ferrarin** (Italy): Today, the Security Council is responding to a cry for help from a region where for far too long human dignity has been trampled on, human rights violated and the most basic rights of every human being — the right to life, food and shelter — have been denied; a region where men, women, the elderly and children are dying of starvation, thirst and disease; a region where all hell has broken loose and a multitude of suffering people are awaiting a signal, an action that could lend them some measure of security and comfort and break the chain of blind violence.

Today, the Security Council is finally answering the message to "Save our Souls" — SOS — coming out of eastern Zaire, a signal that is unfortunately growing fainter with each passing day, and refusing to remain silent before the unfolding tragedy. We are deciding whether to deploy a humanitarian force, a force that above all else must be a true force of peace. The objective we all have in mind is to bring relief and humanitarian aid to endangered populations in the region.

Italy is particularly pleased with the decision that the Security Council is preparing to adopt. Since the start of the Security Council's deliberations on this question we have been arguing for the early deployment of a multinational force and have been making an active contribution at every stage of the discussion. We have initiated diplomatic action with the countries most directly involved, urging them to choose the road of dialogue. We have said over and over again that the international community could not remain silent and passively allow a real-life inferno to unfold before our eyes. We are acting, and acting effectively, to confront the humanitarian emergency in all its difficult aspects. Let me add that Italian aeroplanes are ready to fly to the airports in the region to transport the relief supplies so urgently needed.

We also agree on the need to implement as soon as possible a credible plan to allow for the voluntary — and I stress the word "voluntary" — repatriation of millions of refugees. For that to happen, however, we must have a strong and sincere commitment from their countries of origin. We cannot and must not oblige refugees to return to a place where they may not find the necessary conditions to lead a normal life. But we hope that reason will prevail over other considerations and that a lasting solution to this enormous problem can be rapidly found.

In this connection, we are encouraged by the first reports that we are receiving of a number of refugees heading home. We strongly hope that that trend will continue.

Our action today must mark the beginning of a new phase of cooperation in finding a way out of the instability that has affected the Great Lakes region in recent years. Let us face it: it will be a difficult and demanding task. Nevertheless, we remain convinced that dialogue should be the main element of this effort. We therefore reiterate our strong conviction that an international conference on peace, security and — above all — development in the Great Lakes region must be convened urgently to find answers, once and for all, to the many unsolved issues, and first and foremost, the refugee question.

It is with heartfelt conviction that Italy will vote in favour of the draft resolution to deploy a humanitarian assistance force in eastern Zaire. It is of the utmost priority that the suffering of the civilian population and refugees be alleviated. Too much time has already been wasted.

We are satisfied that the operation we are setting up today will have strict humanitarian purposes and exclude more ambitious tasks, such as interposition between the parties to the conflict. The operation's time-frame will be limited and defined to allow for full implementation of its humanitarian objectives.

The force will have to operate with the consent of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Governments involved. It will be balanced in composition in order to represent the international community as a whole. No country should be predominant. It should reflect the commitment of the international community as a whole, and in particular of a wide range of European and African countries and of the United States. Here, let me express the sincere appreciation of my Government to the Government of Canada, which has agreed to take the lead and ensure the command of this operation.

Italy will participate in this force as an important contributor of troops. We hope that our commitment, which follows the many others undertaken by Italy whenever a humanitarian need has arisen, will help the people in the region. This is our sincere and primary concern.

**Mr. Somavía** (Chile)(*interpretation from Spanish*): First of all, I wish to welcome the representatives of Zaire, Rwanda and Burundi to the Council as it considers an item that affects their national realities so directly in a debate that I am sure they would all have preferred to be unnecessary.

Faced with a humanitarian tragedy like the one unfolding in eastern Zaire, the decision the Security Council is about to adopt is, as others have said, of the utmost urgency. It seems important to begin by expressing thanks. My delegation would first like to thank the Secretary-General, who has kept us constantly abreast of the situation in the region and has even proposed the formula we will adopt today. We would thank Mrs. Ogata, who only three weeks ago, as the Ambassador of Guinea-Bissau has reminded us, visited the Council and, just before leaving, spoke a few words that still echo in my mind. She said, "Do something. Do something so that my people will not have to leave eastern Zaire." We thank the Government of Germany, which initially proposed that the Security Council discuss this subject, and the Government of France, which submitted a concrete initiative and was a sponsor of resolution 1078 (1996).

Most especially, my Government wishes to thank the Government of Canada for taking the initiative of coordinating the efforts leading to the creation, deployment and conduct of a multinational force for humanitarian assistance in Zaire. Also bestowing honour upon Canada is the Secretary-General's appointment of Ambassador Raymond Chrétien of Canada as Special Envoy to the region. We also wish to thank all the countries that have clearly shown interest in contributing to this mission — important countries with means, some of which have operational capabilities not possessed by all Members of the United Nations. It does them honour that they are ready to risk their people — officials and soldiers — in this operation. Countries that have indicated the desire to participate in the mission include those from Latin America and the Caribbean, such as Argentina and Brazil, a fact that I should like to highlight.

Finally, I cannot fail to recognize the heavy burden that Zaire has had to bear in recent years as a result of the number of refugees in its territory for reasons beyond its control.

The Security Council is today shouldering its responsibilities. With resolution 1078 (1996) and the draft resolution that will be adopted today, the Security Council is moving from being an interested observer to becoming a direct participant, using its powers under the Charter to deal with a humanitarian crisis of great magnitude, for which it has the means to act. Those means are now being put into action.

The tragedy faced by the displaced persons and refugees who have fled the camps and the confrontations in eastern Zaire obliged us to act as soon as possible. The truth is that today we do not know how many are dead and wounded, or whether, as the Secretary-General said a few days ago, we are confronting a new genocide, this time provoked by starvation and disease.

After welcoming the offers of Member States concerning the establishment of a multinational force for humanitarian purposes, the draft resolution that we are to adopt states that, acting under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, the Council authorizes Member States cooperating with the Secretary-General to carry out the humanitarian operation. This draft resolution has the potential to be a historic one. It tries not to repeat the past inaction of the Council with regard to Rwanda or the errors made in the case of Somalia. The draft resolution, we will adopt today could have been adopted earlier — not only last Friday, but even last month or last year.

The draft resolution is timely and necessary today because of the crisis being experienced now. However, this is a tardy draft resolution, which demonstrates again the international community's great difficulty in dealing preventively with the items on the Security Council's agenda.

My delegation believes that it is very important to reiterate the references in resolution 1078 (1996) to the costs of the operation. They will be met by the participating States and through other voluntary contributions. This, together with a trust fund of voluntary contributions, will enable the African States to participate in the multinational force, participation that Chile considers absolutely indispensable.

Furthermore, in adopting this draft resolution we will be responding to the request made to the Security Council by African leaders meeting in Nairobi under the leadership of President Moi of Kenya. Accordingly, its implementation should be carried out in close coordination with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Governments of the countries of the Great Lakes region. For us, the Government of Zaire's agreement with the mission that is being authorized has been especially decisive, as it will be deployed on its territory.

The delegation of Chile reiterates that the most urgent part of the mission will be to prevent the humanitarian situation from deteriorating further and provide security to the thousands of people who are in flight so that they can have access to protected areas where they can find food, water and medicine. It will thereby enable the humanitarian agencies — those of the United Nations and of non-governmental organizations — to help these people meet their most essential needs.

However, as previous speakers have said, it is obvious that the massive presence of refugees in eastern Zaire is one of the main causes of the crisis in the region. That is why the draft resolution also seeks the further objective of facilitating a voluntary, orderly repatriation of refugees. If, as the representative of Rwanda said, this has already begun under conditions of security, so much the better. That can only satisfy the goals of the international community. In that way, the citizens of Rwanda can begin to come together again, which is what we all want.

We should recall that resolution 1078 (1996) has some very important provisions in this connection, which supplement those we will be adopting today. It calls upon the Secretary-General, in consultation with his Special Envoy, to draw up a conceptual framework of the operations and structure of a humanitarian task force with the objective, among others, of assisting the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the voluntary repatriation of refugees to their countries of origin, including through the establishment of humanitarian corridors.

It is well known that the current crisis in eastern Zaire is not an isolated event, but is intrinsically connected to situations in other countries of the Great Lakes region. The problem of refugees may be the main element linking them together. A lasting solution to the situation of the refugees will be possible only when the political and security conditions — in Rwanda, Burundi, Zaire or other countries where they may choose to stay — are such that they can return to their places of origin. This makes it necessary for all the regional leaders, together with the international community, to study jointly the various problems in the region and find a means of achieving a definitive and agreed solution. This will be possible by convening an international conference on peace, security and development in the Great Lakes region, as proposed to the international community by France some time ago. One of the most urgent tasks of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General is to determine, together with the OAU and regional leaders modalities for convening it.

Along with the aspiration, desire and will for a useful regional conference, question comes to mind. When we note the internal situations in the countries, we can legitimately wonder whether the faction leaders want a political solution to the problems in the region, or whether they are simply talking about peace while preparing final solutions through force and violence.

I believe that a genuinely political solution will be found only if the leaders have the courage to shake the hands of their so-called enemies. Without moral courage on the part of the leaders fighting within each country, there will be no political solution. That is what history teaches us, and without such moral courage discussion on the issue will continue in the Security Council. There can be no doubt that the international community wants to help the Great Lakes region, but it can help only those who wish to take history by the hand and lead it forward — not reliving the misgivings, anxieties and mistrust of the past, but believing in the possibility of envisaging a Great Lakes region in which there is peace for all. That would not be a mere continuation of the

current situation. It would require a level of courage that we have not yet seen from the leaders.

In conclusion, I should like to say that Chile feels close to Africa and to the countries of the Great Lakes region, as we have shown through our interest in Burundi. Despite our geographical distance, there is no distance in our feelings, no distance in our solidarity and no distance in our political interest in seeking a regional solution. Although we have only modest means, we nonetheless wish to make a humanitarian contribution to the implementation of the draft resolution before us because we believe that our contribution is a symbol of our sense of closeness with the region. It also indicates how we understand our responsibilities in the Security Council.

**Mr. Lavrov** (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Russian Federation is deeply concerned about the humanitarian tragedy unfolding in eastern Zaire, the great loss of human life and the sudden displacement of nearly 1.5 million Rwandese and Burundian refugees and of tens of thousands of Zairians who have found themselves cut off from external aid. The situation threatens to grow into a regional military conflict that would doom all hopes for the restoration of peace and stability in the Great Lakes region.

Russia, like other members of the Security Council, urgently calls on all of the belligerent parties to cease hostilities immediately, enter into political dialogue and refrain from any actions that might exacerbate the crisis. The task of the United Nations and of the entire international community is to promote reconciliation and stabilization in this region in every possible way and to ensure the necessary humanitarian assistance to its suffering population. Russia, for its part, is continuing actively to render such assistance in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

But, of course, the main priority now is the implementation of emergency humanitarian measures to save the lives of hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced persons and that to promote their voluntary and orderly return to their homes. That is precisely what the Security Council has been considering over the past few days. The solution to this urgent task was also the aim of resolution 1078 (1996), which the Council adopted a week ago. It not only clearly highlighted all of the indispensable political factors, but also in fact approved the very concept of sending a multinational force to eastern Zaire. That resolution, which reflected the responsible approach of the Security Council to this emergency situation, helped hasten the formation of the multinational force. Now, when the parameters, format, mandate and objectives of this operation have been clearly defined, the next logical step is to adopt the new draft resolution on the basis of the text submitted, which would immediately launch the deployment of the force.

I should like to pay a well-deserved tribute to the Government of Canada, which has undertaken to lead the multinational force, assuming a difficult burden of responsibility in carrying out this highly complex humanitarian action. I should also like to pay tribute to those States that have already expressed their readiness to participate in the action.

We trust that, in implementing its mandate, the multinational force will act impartially and in cooperation with the Secretary-General, the United Nations Coordinator for humanitarian assistance and the relevant humanitarian organizations and that it will regularly inform the Security Council of the course of the operation. We expect that all interested countries in the region will render full support to the actions of the multinational force and will closely cooperate with it and with the humanitarian agencies to alleviate the suffering of hundreds of thousands of people.

We consider important in all respects the provisions of the draft resolution providing for the significant participation of African contingents. If necessary, this participation will be financed by the voluntary trust fund established by the Secretary-General. We also attach great significance to the draft resolution's reiteration of the urgent need for an international conference on peace, security and development in the Great Lakes region under the auspices of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity to ensure a comprehensive political solution to the problems of the region.

The operation of the multinational force is time-bound. Eventually, the Security Council will have to take a stand regarding further measures. Prejudging these measures in any way here and now would be premature. We should not forget the bitter experiences of several past situations, when the shift from a multinational force to a United Nations operation was not sufficiently worked out in detail, with sometimes catastrophic consequences. In other situations, incidentally, the idea of "passing the torch" from a multinational force to a United Nations operation has been rejected outright. To avoid ill-considered actions and double standards, the Security Council must not hasten to become engaged, but each

time must, with a sense of full responsibility, consider the possibility of adopting one or more decisions in the light of the Secretary-General's recommendations, of the real situation and, of course, of the positions of the parties directly involved. It is precisely from that perspective that our delegation reads operative paragraph 12; on the basis of this understanding, we shall vote in favour of the draft resolution.

**Mrs. Albright** (United States of America): With great sadness, the world is once again watching tragedy unfold in Central Africa. None of us can forget the shock and horror of the strife in Rwanda in 1994, the hundreds of thousands of innocent people slaughtered in churches and schoolyards and in their homes. Millions of refugees fled the violence across the borders into Zaire and Tanzania. Thousands died in makeshift camps until the international community was able to bring water, food and medicine. Now, in the last few weeks, new fighting again has sent most refugees and displaced persons into flight, danger and deprivation and blocked humanitarian support from reaching them. Their plight is urgent.

The international community is, as always, ready to assist those most in need — the innocent civilians caught between fighting and fear. Last week, the Security Council adopted a resolution which laid the basis for a rapid and effective international response. In the interim, the Secretary-General's special envoy and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have been working to calm the situation and aid the refugees. And a lot of nations have been developing coordinated plans for a temporary humanitarian force, under the leadership of Canada, to permit restoration of aid and repatriation of refugees.

But the complexities of the situation in eastern Zaire, with multiple armed groups and a fragile political environment, require prudent preparation. The United States strongly supports the initiative of the Canadian Government to lead a multinational force to allow the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the refugees and displaced persons in the current crisis, with the dual function of facilitating the voluntary repatriation of refugees to their home countries. We welcome the offers by nations from around the world to participate in the multinational force that the Security Council would be authorizing with this draft resolution, as well as the many offers of humanitarian assistance.

The long-term solution is voluntary repatriation of the refugees. To avert a recurrence of this humanitarian tragedy, refugees who wish to return to Rwanda must be able to do so. It appears, as we speak, that perhaps tens of thousands are finally taking advantage of this opportunity. We welcome this development and hope it continues. The Government of Rwanda has taken credible steps and made further pledges to ensure the security of the refugees and is working with the international relief agencies to assist them upon their return. We are consulting with the Governments of the region on the arrangements necessary for potential deployment of United States forces.

The United States is working closely with the Canadian and other Governments, the United Nations agencies and the humanitarian community to determine precisely the humanitarian requirements and how we might most usefully participate in these humanitarian efforts and to facilitate the orderly and successful repatriation of the refugees. Although considerable progress has been made, some outstanding questions concerning the organization and operation of the mission remain to be worked out. It is a complex effort and planning for an appropriate operation to follow the temporary multinational force must also begin right away.

We applaud the effort that the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), regional leaders, the European Union and other mediators are making to address the underlying political problems that must be resolved before the region can achieve true peace and stability. We urge all the parties in the region to cease hostilities directed at one another, cooperate with the mediation efforts, permit the flow of humanitarian assistance and support the secure repatriation of refugees. We also urge all parties to cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, which is authorized to deal with those persons responsible for the 1994 genocide.

**The President:** I shall now make a statement on behalf of the Indonesian delegation.

The situation on the ground in eastern Zaire continues to deteriorate. The plight of over 1 million refugees who have already suffered from atrocities, hunger, thirst and miserable conditions demands the immediate action of the international community. In this context, Indonesia highly commends the speedy action taken by the leaders of the region, as manifested in the communiqué of the Nairobi Summit of 5 November 1996. The Security Council must take action today in

order to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe that may have serious repercussions on the stability and security of the whole Great Lakes region.

It is imperative that a ceasefire be established in order to end the violence and thereby facilitate a negotiated solution to the conflict. We also call upon the various Governments concerned in those territories to allow access for humanitarian relief organizations to enable them to distribute food and medical care to the scattered refugees and the internally displaced persons. It is in this context that my delegation, pursuant to paragraph 8 of resolution 1078 (1996), supports the establishment of a multinational force to carry out the tasks and to facilitate the voluntary, orderly repatriation of refugees and displaced persons, as clearly reflected in paragraph 3 of the present draft resolution. Indonesia pays tribute to Canada for its commendable decision to take the initiative to establish the multinational force and to lead the operation.

There has been much debate on the mandate, sources and scope of such an operation. Past experience has taught the international community to be wary of involvement in a conflict, albeit with humanitarian intentions in mind, without a clear vision. The present role of the multinational force, as it is being defined, appears to be addressing this concern by establishing a targeted and realistic mandate. Such a force must have the means to defend and protect itself as well as the international relief personnel. The time-frame of four months may suffice to overcome the emergency phase of the crisis. Further dimensions of the conflict need to be addressed as well if a lasting solution is to be found. However, they should be considered in the next phase of operations.

In the context of finding a durable and comprehensive solution for the conflicts in the region, the convening of an international conference on peace, security and development in the Great Lakes region can no longer be postponed. It must be held with the participation of all the Governments concerned under the joint auspices of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), as called for in Security Council resolution 1078 (1996).

In the light of these considerations, Indonesia is ready to vote in favour of the draft resolution and support the deployment of a temporary multinational force to eastern Zaire until 31 March 1997. We wish to emphasize, however, that the principles of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Zaire must be upheld throughout the operation of the multinational force.

In conclusion, we would like to extend our appreciation to the Special Envoy, Ambassador Raymond Chrétien, for his tireless efforts and positive contributions in finding a solution to the current crisis in the Great Lakes region.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I shall now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/1996/943.

*A vote was taken by show of hands.*

*In favour:*

Botswana, Chile, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Indonesia, Italy, Poland, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

**The President:** There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1080 (1996).

I have just received a letter dated 15 November 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations which reads as follows:

> "With reference to the discussion on the situation of eastern Zaire, I have the honour of informing you that it had been the intention of Brazil to be a co-sponsor of the draft resolution contained in document S/1996/943."

That letter will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/1996/949.

There are no further speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

*The meeting rose at 7.35 p.m.*